

## BALDCYPRESS

### *Taxodium distichum* (L) Rich.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Common baldcypress, Gulf cypress, Red cypress, Southern cypress.

FORM: Occasionally 150 feet tall, generally 4-5 feet in diameter above the enlarged buttressed base; crown in old trees broad, rounded, may be 100 feet across.

BARK: 1-2 inches thick, light cinnamon-red, divided by shallow fissures into broad flat ridges separating on the surface into long fibrous scales.

TWIGS: At first light green, then light red-brown, later become darker, lateral branchlets 3-4 inches long, spread at right angles to the branch, become deciduous.

LEAVES: On distichously spreading branchlets, 1/2-3/4 inch long, about 1/12 inch wide, light bright yellow-green occasionally, silvery-white below; on the form with pendulous branchlets, long-pointed, keeled and stomantiferous below, about 1/2 inch long.

FLOWERS: Staminate in slender, purplish, tassel-like clusters 4-5 inches long; pistillate flowers scattered, near the ends of branchlets of the preceding year, solitary or in pairs.

FRUIT: Nearly globose or obovoid, rugose, about 1 inch in diameter, scales usually without tips; seeds with wings, nearly 1/4 inch long, 1/8 inch wide.

WINTER BUDS: Near the tip of the shoot rounded with overlapping sharp-pointed scales; lateral buds smaller; branchlets which fall in the autumn without buds.

WOOD: Light, soft, not strong, easily worked, light or dark brown; very durable.

USES: Lumber fences, interior and exterior paneling. Historical uses: barrel staves.

HABITAT: Swamps inundated several months of the year, low wet banks of streams.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Large buttressed base of the trunk; seed irregularly triangular, with thick coat; woody protuberances, "cypress knees", often arise from roots. Pondcypress, *Taxodium ascendens* Brong. is found closely associated with baldcypress, but usually on isolated pond areas.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Most abundant in the southern tier of counties and occurs locally elsewhere. Pondcypress appears closer to the Gulf Coast on isolated pond areas.

#### EXPLANATION OF PLATE

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. A flowering branch                                       | 11. A scale of a cone with its seeds, side view  |
| 2. A staminate flower                                       | 12. A scale of a cone, its seeds removed         |
| 3. A scale of a staminate flower                            | 13. A seed                                       |
| 4. A scale of a staminate flower, front view                | 14. Cross section of a seed                      |
| 5. A pistillate flower                                      | 15. A vertical section of a seed                 |
| 6. Diagram of a pistillate flower                           | 16. An embryo                                    |
| 7. A scale of a pistillate flower, with ovaries, front view | 17. Staminate winter flower buds                 |
| 8. Vertical section of a scale of a pistillate flower       | 18. Pistillate winter buds                       |
| 9. A fruiting branch  | 19. Winter leaf buds                             |
| 10. A partly grown fruit                                    | 20. Vertical section of a branch with a leaf bud |
|   | 21. A seedling                                   |
|   | 22. Portion of a branch with acicular leaves     |



**Taxodium distichum (L) Rich.**